



April 2, 2009

The Honorable Lamar Smith
United States House of Representatives
2409 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Congressman Smith:

I write to express my support for San Antonio Water System (SAWS) project requests for FY 2010 appropriations. As President/CEO of SAWS, I appreciate any assistance you can provide to SAWS public infrastructure projects that maximize ratepayer funding of public projects through a meaningful reinvestment of tax dollars locally in San Antonio and Bexar County.

SAWS requests \$1,000,000 in federal assistance to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help fund the Nueces River and Tributaries Study. The Nueces River study is authorized for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and along with four other regional participants, SAWS aims to ensure that this critical study is completed in a timely and diligent manner.

The Nueces River and Tributaries study is a continuation into detailed study of the complex relationships between surface water, groundwater and the varying ecosystems and communities dependent on such water. The scope of this multi-purpose feasibility study represents a holistic approach to addressing ecosystem restoration, flood control, aquifer recharge, water supply, water quality, brush management, and overall watershed resource management. Collectively, these previously listed components are expected to function as a system. FY 2010 funds will be used to further document existing conditions, complete updates to existing hydrologic and hydraulic models for the upper basin, initiate development of a hydrodynamic routing model for the Nueces delta and new hydrologic and hydraulic models for the mid and lower basin.

The State of Texas considers this a high priority study, as it directly relates to water management strategies developed as part of the 2007 State Water Plan. This project is a meaningful reinvestment of public funds that benefits area water resources. Public funding of this project helps ensure the health of the Nueces River, which in turn helps Edwards Aquifer through recharge features. Firm recharge benefits San Antonio and Bexar County water supply as well as the springs that support species in Nueces River Springs and Edwards Aquifer.

Thank you for your consideration of SAWS FY 2010 funding requests. Please do not hesitate to contact my staff or me should you require further assistance.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "R. Puente", written over a horizontal line.

Robert R. Puente
President/CEO

RRP/wrp